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Second Committee

Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 September 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Asadi ..... (Islamic Republic of Iran)

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98-81393 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Election of officers

1. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had nominated Mr. Prendergast (Jamaica), the Group of Western European and Other States had nominated Mr. Özügergin (Turkey) and the Group of African States had nominated Mr. Agona (Uganda) for the three posts of Vice-Chairman. The Group of Eastern European States had nominated Mr. Gerus (Belarus) for the post of Rapporteur.

2. *Mr. Prendergast (Jamaica), Mr. Özügergin (Turkey) and Mr. Agona (Uganda) were elected Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Gerus (Belarus) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Organization of work (A/53/250, A/C.2/53/L.1 and Add.1)

3. **The Chairman** said that meetings would begin promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. If a delegation was absent, it would automatically be placed last on the list of speakers for that meeting.

4. Based on previous experience, it was proposed that the time limits for all speakers should be 15 minutes in the general debate and seven minutes on individual agenda items. Those time limits would also apply to speakers from agencies, funds and programmes. Introductory statements by members of the Secretariat would be limited to 10 minutes. Introductory statements should focus on highlights and priorities and, if possible, be distributed in advance.

5. The Committee's agenda was based on the clusters of items laid down in General Assembly resolution 50/227 and the time-frame laid down in Assembly resolution 48/162. The programme of work took into account the availability of reports and, to the extent possible, the ability of high-level representatives of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes to be present at meetings.

6. The Bureau would consider proposals for themes and focus for discussion under the clusters of items, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227. Members of the Committee were invited to convey their suggestions to the Bureau. The selection of a theme would not preclude the delivery of statements on other specific issues under the cluster.

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227, the Bureau would meet with the Bureau of the Third Committee in order to review the respective programmes of work, identify potential areas of overlap and make recommendations to the Committee.

8. As requested in General Assembly resolution 50/227, draft resolutions would be shorter. Procedural issues would be dealt with in decisions rather than in resolutions. The Bureau would explore the possibility of dealing with clusters of related items in omnibus or combined resolutions. Also in accordance with Assembly resolution 50/227, at the end of the session, the Committee would review its draft programme for the following year with a view to rationalizing and simplifying reporting procedures. Deadlines for the submission of draft proposals would be strictly applied.

9. Following the successful practice of the previous year, there would be a number of executive briefings by senior officials, panel discussions on topics on the Committee's agenda and keynote addresses. All suggestions from Committee members were welcome.

10. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the arrangements he had outlined were acceptable to the Committee.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **Mr. Glanzer** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, agreed that time limits for statements should be strictly enforced. The Committee's debates would be more productive if they were attended by members of the Secretariat who could respond immediately to points raised by delegations. It would be best to hold the informal panels and briefings prior to formal discussions in the Committee on the items concerned. In the spirit of General Assembly resolution 50/227, the Bureau could explore the possibility of holding joint panels with the Third Committee, since both Committees sometimes addressed the same topics.

13. The European Union fully endorsed the idea of dealing with procedural issues in decisions, dealing with clusters of related items in omnibus resolutions and adhering strictly to deadlines for the submission of proposals.

14. The previous year's practice of giving advance notice of informal meetings should be continued.

15. **Mr. Hapsoro** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, thanked the secretariat of the Second Committee for preparing the draft proposed programme of work (A/C.2/53/L.1, annex), which they endorsed.

16. Executive briefings should be continued and should be held prior to the formal debates in the Committee in order to help delegations prepare for the debates. The format of panel discussions should be continued. In that regard,

question-and-answer periods would make for livelier debates.

17. The Group of 77 and China wished to reiterate that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227, the selection of a theme would not preclude the delivery of statements by delegations on other specific issues under the cluster.

18. The Group of 77 and China wished to underscore the need for the Committee to avoid night and weekend meetings and stood ready to work constructively with other delegations to improve the Committee's work.

19. The Group of 77 and China reiterated their concern about the late submission of documentation, especially reports, which often delayed the consideration of important issues by the Committee.

20. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to document A/C.2/53/L.1, and to the action taken by the General Assembly based on the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee (A/53/250) relating to the organization of the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

21. **Ms. Kelley** (Secretary of the Committee) announced the following changes in the draft proposed programme of work. The deadline for the submission of draft proposals under current agenda items 99 (a) and (b) and agenda item 100 should be Friday, 30 October. Under Tuesday, 10 November, it should be added that the deadline for the submission of draft proposals under agenda item 91 (a) was 1 p.m.

22. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) asked why it was necessary to hold two separate pledging conferences, the first on 3 November for the World Food Programme, and the second on 5 November for operational activities for development. He stressed the need for the timely submission of documents in order to speed up the Committee's work.

23. **The Chairman** said that decisions concerning pledging conferences were not within the competence of the Committee.

24. *The draft proposed programme of work contained in A/C.2/53/L.1, as orally revised, was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.